

Robinson-Aiken Necessary Building
48 Elizabeth Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-277

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PHOTOGRAPH
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-277

ROBINSON-AIKEN NECESSARY BUILDING

Address: 48 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, Charleston County,
South Carolina.

Present Owner: I'On Lowndes Rhett, 48 Elizabeth Street, Charleston,
South Carolina.

Brief Statement of Significance: A rare example of its type with notable architectural
character.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: John Robinson, original owner, bought the land in 1817. (Charleston County Mesne Conveyance Office, vol. V-8, p. 393 [longhand]). He sold house in 1826 to William Aiken, Charles Edmonston and Lewis A. Pitray. (Ibid. vol. T-9, p. 238). Governor William Aiken lived here and house went to his daughter, Mrs. A. Burnet Rhett. (Information from Mrs. I'On Lowndes Rhett).
- B. Date of Erection: Circa 1840.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The necessary buildings are built against the northwest and northeast corners of the garden wall; the former has had the interior altered in modern times, and the latter has a deteriorated interior. The masonry portions of these two structures are in good condition. Since the two appear to have been identical in design the northeast one will be described here.

In plan, the building appears to be a square (about 11') with the southwest corner cut off to form an entrance facade about 8' wide. This southwest wall has simple brick pilasters at the corners, between which springs a low elliptical arch of one rowlock course. A projecting brick course forms the impost. Within the elliptical arch is a brick wall pierced by a doorway and a louvered window on each side of it; all three openings have pointed (two-centered) arches of one rowlock course. The arch of the doorway is higher and wider than the others. The door is louvered. There is a low parapet above the blank elliptical arch. On the ground in front of this facade is a large rectangular paving stone with a brick edging.

The west and south walls, which are each about 6' wide, are similar; each has corner pilasters, a blank elliptical arch, and a single louvered window with pointed arch.

Portions of a flat roof and plastered ceiling remain, but the floor, which was presumably wooden, has disappeared. The rear wall of the interior is of frame, with lath and plaster; it was built diagonally across the corner of the garden walls, making it parallel to the entrance wall, and leaving a ventilating shaft in the corner. The north and east interior walls have some furring and boarding still in place. Part of the riser and seats remain, against the rear wall.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
August 1962

Addendum to:

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Washington, D.C.